



PUNCY

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



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Charivaria

We read that since the war tailors send out their bills more promptly. Don't they realize it's an offence to waste paper?

HITLER declares that 1942 will be the year of victory. Yes, but in 1940 it wasn't made clear that he was to have three guesses.

A correspondent says he is growing quite enough vegetables for his household without digging up the lawn—which, however, he will continue to cultivate for dandelion salad.



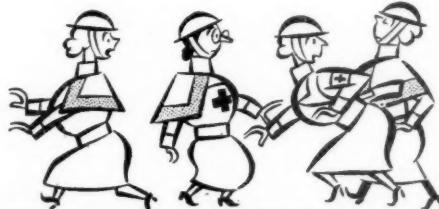
A new Army Order decrees that soldiers shall now fix and unfix bayonets quietly and in their own time. What awes troops most is the eerie hush that descends on the drill-sergeant during the operation.

When a bottle of whisky was put up for auction at a charity sale the response was at first very slow. Bidders just didn't believe it.

Tempting Offer

"During the past year the Hospital has lost a number of patients through death. May I appeal to you to fill this gap?"
Hospital Appeal.

The story is told that a traveller in a country district saw cigarettes being sold from a motor-caravan. It must be excellent exercise for the queue.



A Nazi broadcaster recently said it was possible for a German private soldier to become a general. But not for long.

Shame!

"The whole tendency, he said, was for the Home Guard and Cadets to get the boys between 14 and 17, and the Scouts, Boys' Brigade, Girls' Guildry, and Girl Guides were not to have a fair share."—*Dundee Paper.*

HITLER is fifty-three this week. There were great celebrations in Germany on the occasion of his last birthday, but unfortunately it wasn't.

Several members of a Commando unit write poetry in their spare time. We don't care. The Editor's decision is final.

Departmental stores are reducing the number of lifts to save electric current. It is hoped too that the cinema organist will learn to swarm up a rope ladder to take his place at the console.

A man in America playing golf for the first time did a hole in one four times during an afternoon. He exasperated more experienced players by naively inquiring what the putter was for.

A Home Guard nurses' unit is being drilled by a regimental sergeant-major. What impresses the girls most is what he frequently almost says.



Tears, Idle Tears

WHEN I had read in my evening paper "The Ministry of Food have appointed their own Big Three from Scotland Yard to deal with the Black Market," how hard it was to prevent my thoughts from wandering to that April evening long ago in Baker Street when the blurred lamp-light was reflected from the puddles, and only a single four-wheeled cab could be seen in the far distance driving furiously up the deserted thoroughfare! How hard, did I say? It was so hard that I made no effort. I permitted my thoughts to wander as they would.

There they sat, the long lithe figure of the detective leaning back in his arm-chair, complaining with some bitterness to his friend and biographer that only the most sensational cases were admitted to the chronicles, while many a more brilliant triumph of deduction (like the Mysterious Affair of the Tattooed Wharfinger) had never been revealed to the most impudent patron of the *Strand Magazine*.

And the flustered client . . .

Very beautiful she was when, pushing up her thick black veil, she revealed her features stained with weeping, haggard with an anxiety which gave place to indignation and bewilderment when Holmes observed quietly: "And what has brought you to see me, Lady Blottingham?"

She bridled.

"How can you possibly know who I am, Mr. Holmes?"

"Madam, if you wished to conceal your identity you should have removed your family crest from your pocket handkerchief."

She blushed.

"A terrible thing has happened, Mr. Holmes! The Blottingham onions have been stolen."

"The famous rope?"

"None other."

"Renowned among all the cognescents of Belgravia?"

"It is indeed."

"Coveted by all the gourmets of Bloomsbury?"

She nodded.

"They were bequeathed to me by my father, the Duke of Matlock, just before he died of a chill last autumn. He grew them on his own allotment in Hanover Square. As you know, they are almost irreplaceable at the present moment, for the new crop has only recently been planted. I was to wear them at the Free Bulgarian Ball at the Grosvenor Hotel. They would then have been raffled and we hoped to raise a thousand pounds for the cause."

"Kindly narrate the circumstances."

She narrated them. Every night the vegetables had been locked up in a small safe, the key of which she kept under her pillow. No one but her ninety-year-old maid knew the secret. The key had not been taken, but the safe was rifled, there were marks on the window-sill, footprints on the drive and on the carrot-bed, and lettuce-shoots were trampled down.

"And the gate and the railings?"

"They have been turned into Hurricanes."

"You have informed Scotland Yard?"

"I did so immediately, but so far they have been unable to assist me."

She left, still weeping.

Holmes (I think) rose quietly and went to the bookcase, took down a fat red volume and studied it intently.

"We are in deep waters, Watson, very deep. But hullo, whom have we here?"

Lestrade? Of course it was Lestrade. Confident, but not over confident. Gifted, but alas! uninspired.

"I think we shall soon lay our man by the heels, Mr. Holmes."

"What have you done so far?"

"We have interviewed the managers of every large hotel in London and the provinces, and drawn a cordon round Soho. Every well-known fruiterer is being watched night and day. Shoulders of mutton are being shadowed by officials of the Ministry of Food."

"You suspect the Black Market?"

The great man put the tips of his fingers together and slowly shook his head.

"Come, come, Mr. Holmes, you are trifling with me."

"I was never more serious in my life."

He goes away downhearted. The two friends are left together. Holmes borrows a match. The room grows poisonous with the fumes of shag.

"Have you any ideas, Watson?"

"None whatever."

"Yet to me the case seems remarkably simple. Are you prepared for a little expedition?"

He is.

"Do I need my revolver, Holmes?"

"An assegai will be ample."

They set out.

Need I continue? The briefest summary will surely suffice. The visit to the great mansion, occupied except for one small wing by the Ministry of Integral Complications and Co-ordinated Affairs; the interview with Lord Blottingham, aristocratic to his finger-tips and a former Secretary of State for War; the sudden fainting-fit which overcame the great detective; the pulling away of a curtain as he staggers wildly, to reveal an unsuspected door; the fury of Lord Blottingham, who snatches a knobkerrie from the wall; the brief fight; the triumph of Watson; the little room redolent of savoury suppers with its improvised kitchen apparatus; the discovery of all that is left of the famous Blottingham rope; the copy of Mrs. Beeton's book open at the words "Take two large onions"; the confession of the humiliated nobleman; the gyves, the prison van; all these things will be guessed immediately by every student of the old magician's ways.

And Watson's naive perplexity. . . .

"The footprints, Holmes, and the scratches on the window-sill?"

"A mere blind, Watson. And a very obvious one. Not in the least difficult for a man of athletic build who has been a big-game hunter as well as a politician. Besides I suspected him immediately. Amongst the list of clubs to which Lord Blottingham belongs I note The Gastronomic Circle in Pall Mall and The Epicures' in St. James's Square. They were both, I think, bombed a year ago. And now, if you care to accompany me, I believe there is an excellent concert at the Boetian Hall."

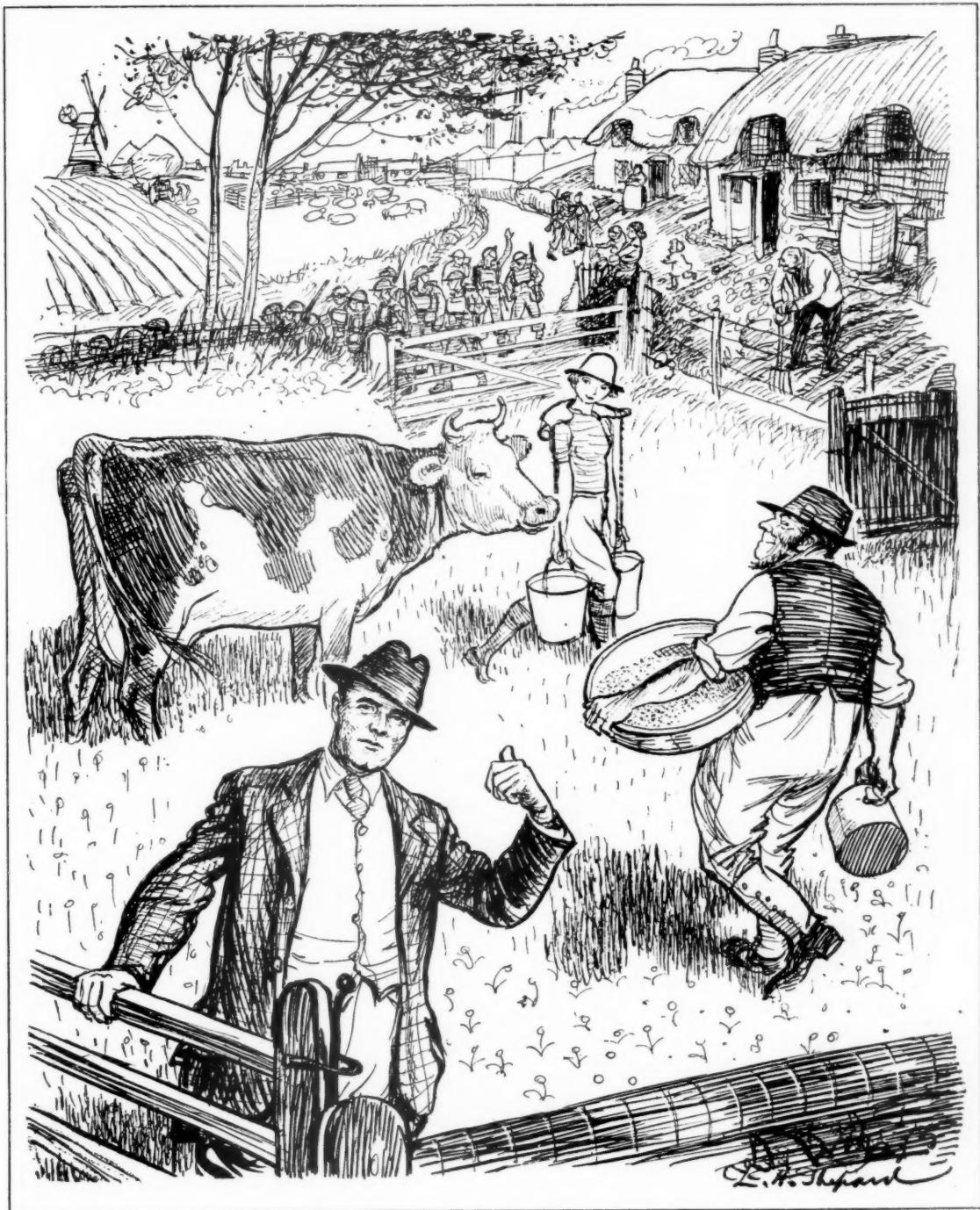
But they are both crying a little as they go away. EVOE.

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"The club first offered him \$37,000,000, the same salary he received last season, but he turned it down and said he wanted \$45,000 but said last night that they had compromised.

"We split it down the middle after a one hour conference," Barrow said."—Canadian Paper.

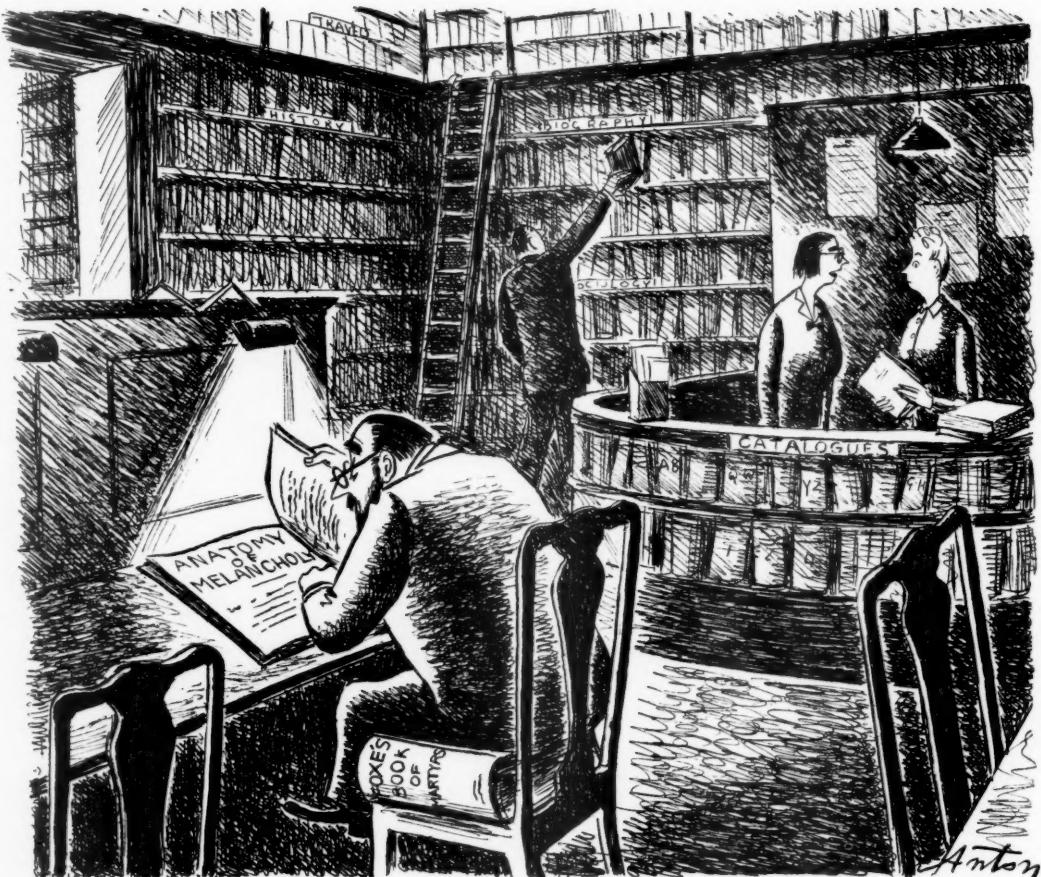
What's eighteen million dollars between friends?



THE HUDSON WAY

"This is the man
That grows the food
That feeds the cow
That gives the milk

That feeds the home
That sends the lads
That fight the war
To hold the fort
That John built."



"I don't know what's happened to him—he always used to READ 'Foxe's Book of Martyrs' and SIT ON 'Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy'."

At the Rites

THE Shakespeare Festival of 1942 opened at Stratford in wintry circumstance. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* came first, but *The Tempest* would have been more seemly. The April trees were still bare, ruined choirs and some of the elms in the churchyard, which set so noble a plume upon the curve and rhythm of the riverside, have had to go. But the sheltered garden of New Place was blazing into confident colour, and, thank heaven, nobody has yet deemed it a patriotic duty to dig up the lovely lawn between New Place and the Avon and make a cabbage-patch where most of all in Stratford the poet's spirit might seem

to linger, which is under the mulberries and among the flowers, and not in the museums and other places of ritual visitation.

When the sun arrived to gild Avon's full and far from pale stream with heavenly alchemy, navigation was brisk, for the cultural pilgrims have been largely replaced by young men and women in uniform. Now, surveying Stratford's war-time denizens, who, regardless of the shrine and the cult, go about their leisure hours, we may well comprehend why *Theseus* loved "a bouncing Amazon."

Furthermore, *Sir Toby's* perplexing description of Maria as "the youngest Wren of nine" seems far less odd than it used to in the Stratford of to-day.

The newcomers appear to respect the Avon quite as much for its river as for its Bard. The swans, in their turn, regard these aquatic invaders with understandable disfavour. After all, who or what is a mere Wren to disturb the peace and courting-season of a blood-royal Avonian swan? Meanwhile, at the theatre, which will never please everybody's eye but will always please everybody's limbs—so easy is it made to sit under Shakespeare—the uniforms get an excellent bargain. They are introduced to Eng. Lit. and Elizabethan Drama most humanely

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

from *Bottom* upwards with the maximum of comfort and the minimum of price.

"SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL"

And so to some of the plays. By chance I side-stepped Shakespeare even in the gate of the temple and had a night with Sheridan instead. No longer is there any dread of those resolute American Bardolaters, who of old, having only one night to spend at Stratford and finding Shakespeare off the menu, were in a mood to "give the works" to any management not giving them the plays. So they could let R. B. S. into the rites last year and Goldsmith the year before and, if this sort of thing goes on, the High Street caterers will play false to Hathaway and all such, and blazon instead "Ye Olde Teazle Tea-shoppe" and the "Malaprop Milk Bar."

The trouble about Sheridan at Stratford is the presence of a frontal apron-stage, which, though most suitable for the Bardic stage-craft, bears very hardly on plays of other periods. It sets the curtained space at a long and chilly remove from the audience and is apt to leave the distant drama strangled, as it were, by its own apron-strings. However, an excellent *Lady Candour* (Miss BUENA BENT) soon starts to combat the difficulty with success and Mr. GEORGE SKILLAN, a grand *Sir Oliver*, still further stokes the genial fires. Miss MARGARETTA SCOTT is a *Lady Teazle* fit for a Gainsborough canvas, and as lively as lovely. Mr. GEORGE HAYES gives quality to that *Joseph* whose surface is all sentiment. Nowadays the seniors must perforce enact some of the junior rôles, but they should be careful not to overdo the juvenility. After all, numbers of young men do omit to cross the room with hop, skip, and jump. Mr. BALIOL HOLLOWAY is not the youngest but is certainly the most agile *Charles Surface* of my acquaintance. I felt that at any moment he might leap the dining-room table or turn an adjacent chandelier into a flying trapeze. Mr. HANNAM CLARK as *Sir Peter* goes quietly to the opposite extreme. This is a portrait of a very old and very nice and very gentle old gentleman, so old and nice and gentle that he, at times, escapes one's notice altogether amid the hurly-burly of the comedy. Performers of this rôle have rarely, I fancy, thus combined the modesty of the violet with the name and nature of *Teazle*.

"AS YOU LIKE IT"

As a rule, my liking for it is small. Only here does SHAKESPEARE seem to

tolerate prigs. I never could be angry with the *Duke* who banished his brother. Anybody would have banished such a bore, with his endless flow of Nature Notes and Improving Thoughts. And *Jaques*? I can often agree with him about the desirability of being "better strangers." But this year my apprehensions were groundless. Mr. HOLLOWAY's happy production, as well as being an essay in the melancholy of *Jaques*, brings fresh life into the much-frequented woods of Arden. Mr. JAY LAURIER, in the pastoral-comical episodes, does not overwork the comical: he can play the Fool so well by now that he need no longer play the fool. But the real triumph is in the unforced pulse of youth and romance, of fantastical fairy-tale, of genuine high spirits in the performances of Miss MARGARETTA SCOTT and Miss SARA JACKSON as *Rosalind* and *Celia*. They really act the play as though they had just come across it for the first time, and so give the audience the same delightful sense of enjoying a discovery. Mr. LEE FOX is a quiet, handsome, unrhetorical *Orlando*; he looks his adoration better than he declaims it. The Arden scene has renewed its power to enchant. Down in the forest something stirred.

"HAMLET"

Mr. GEORGE HAYES is another senior stepping into the shoes of youth.

His *Hamlet* is naturally, therefore, more sedate and reasonable than racked with youth's despair and disillusion. He argues gravely with his own state of mind, and one fancies at the end that Denmark is losing the model monarch for an intelligent democracy. The lines are lucidly, intelligently spoken, which is a pleasant change from the modern mode of gabbling Shakespeare as though one were ashamed of him. That mood must never be admitted at Stratford of all places, and Mr. IDEN PAYNE, who continues to direct most of the annual rites in the playhouse, will surely be adamant for a clear, considered, and audible text. Of course he has had very hard work to fill the male parts satisfactorily this year, but I surmise that Stratford's new type of visitor will receive from the players a just impression of the local Hero who has so long been also the local Industry.

I. B.

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"As the result of recent gifts it now possesses a unique collection of drawings by William Blake, and it has also acquired a number of paintings of outstanding merit by Dante, Gabriel, Rossetti, John Singer, Sargent, Augustus John, Richard Sickert and Wilson Steer."—*Belfast Paper*.

Nothing by that wonderful pair Van and Gogh?



Merton Wilson.

"... and where's Lord Woolton going to pounce next?"

Little Talks

IF there was an earthquake in Tokyo to-morrow, how much would you send to the Lord Mayor's Fund?

Don't be absurd.

Come on, you've got to love your enemies. What would you contribute to the suffering Japs if they had another meritorious earthquake?

Don't be offensive. Have a drink. What'll you have, George?

Thanks, old boy. I'd like a stout. Henry?

Don't think I want anything, old boy.

Oh, come on. I haven't bought a drink yet.

Why should you?

Well, I've had one on each of you.

Yes, but—

What is it? Same again? Or have a short one?

I tell you what I'd really like. And that would be a cup of coffee. And a ham-sandwich.

Coffee? I don't suppose there is any coffee. Any coffee, Mrs. Martin?

No, Sir.

Ham-sandwich?

No, Sir.

But why haven't you got any coffee for Henry? You're a licensed victualler, aren't you?

Yes, Sir. I wish I could. I often think I'd like to have a big urn in the corner here. Hot coffee or tea. Lots of the ladies would like it too.

Why not, then?

My brewers are against it. They don't like me to sell nothing but beer, and that.

But how very short-sighted of them.

Some of them is like that, Sir.

Especially when there's hardly any beer.

Of course, you'd have the temperance people against you as well.

I suppose so—some of them, anyhow. Making the pub too attractive, and all that.

The Government ought to knock their heads together and say: "Let there be coffee and eats in every pub."

Quite right. After all, it's the only place everybody can go to, and there ought to be something for everybody in it.

Down in the East End, in the blitz, the police were making the pubs open at breakfast-time.

Well, that's the spirit. And I'll bet there was coffee then. Anyhow, you can't have coffee now. Try a stout?

There's no more stout, Sir.

Have a Scotch, then?

All right. I don't really want it, but—

Don't make a favour of it, old boy. I shan't take umbrage if you stand out—

Well, as a matter of fact, you might. A lot of people do.

Not since the Budget. Anyhow, here's all you wish yourself! Cheers, George.

Cheer-oh!

So you're against treating, are you, old boy? That's a new and startling turn of the kaleidoscope.

In war-time, yes. I think I am. Last war there was a No-Treating Order, wasn't there?

I believe there was; and a lot of other nonsense. For heaven's sake leave the pub alone. It's about the only thing they haven't mucked about with yet.

I don't want any of the other nonsense. But I shouldn't grouse about this if they tried it.

But it's so darned unsociable, seems to me, marching in and drinking by yourself. I should feel a toad.

You don't feel a toad, do you, if you go into a coffee-shop and have tea and toast on your own?

That's different.

I don't see how.

How did it work last war?

I don't know—I was overseas. But I believe it did work.

Easiest thing in the world to get round. You simply slip the money—

Ah, yes, if you're determined to get round it, no doubt. But it wouldn't be such a habit. Look at us three—always going about together as we do. Nine times out of ten we don't want more than a couple each. But just because one of us hasn't paid his round we all have to have three. And with everything short, as it is, it's a waste, to say no more.

Something in that. But look at the taxes we pay, old boy!

That never exhilarates me much, I must say.

What do you think of the Budget then?

I've tried to show you what I think by refusing Number 3.

And I've tried to show you what I think. Have a cigar, old boy?

No, thanks.

Why so curt?

Well, to be frank, I don't think it would be right.

Be as frank as you like. You mean you think that our noble Chancellor would disapprove?

Well, yes.

But why should you think that? What do you think he wants of us?

He wants us to give up drinking and smoking.

On the contrary he wants us to give him £575,000,000 through drinking and smoking.

How much?

£575,000,000.

Don't be absurd.

Certainly. Add up the Estimated Receipts on Spirits, Wine, Beer, Tobacco and Licence Duties and that's the figure you get. At least, I do.

Well, we all smoke too much.

Maybe. But if we all stop smoking the Chancellor will lose £304,000,000—this year.

Christmas! What about tea and all that?

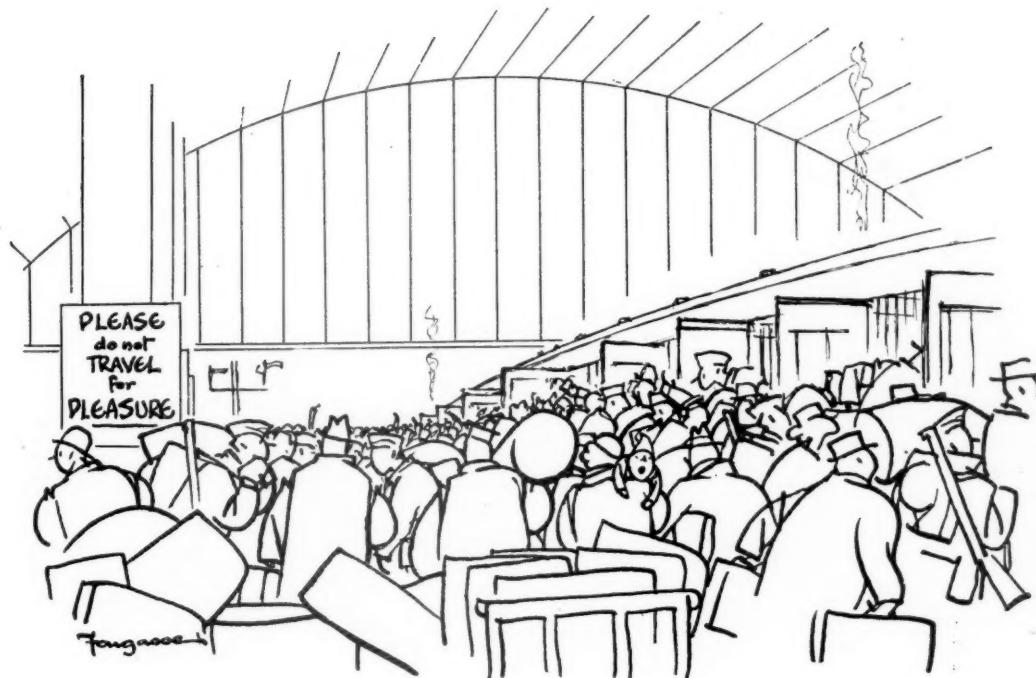
That's rather odd. Tea, cocoa, coffee and chicory are going to contribute only £22,850,000. And, of course, we horrid drinkers and smokers come in a good bit on that as well. But, forgetting that, the drinker and smoker are going to pay twenty-three times as much in taxation as the teetotaller and non-smoker.

How much does the war cost a day?

Between thirteen and fourteen millions. So the non-smoking teetotaller keeps the war going for a day and a bit. But we iniquitous chaps keep it going for



"Heaven knows where some people get their clothing coupons."



forty days, and more, on our own. Yet we all get the same protection from the Fleet.

It doesn't seem right.

It doesn't. Especially as tea, coffee, and chicory have to be brought here in ships, while beer and whisky are made at home.

Ah, but they're not so virtuous.

All right then. Prohibit them. One thing or the other. Either they're so vile that we ought not to have them at all; or they're so necessary that we must have them, even in times of war—as we must have tea: in which case let the taxes be I don't say the same, but comparable.

You can't leave out the moral side.

There you've raised about three different hares. I've only time for one. If you can't leave out the moral side, what about betting?

Betting?

The one definite feature in Sir Stafford Cripps' famous "austerity" speech was "Less dog-racing." There is less dog-racing; but there's lots of it still. And I'm not complaining about that.

They pay entertainment-tax, don't they?

Yes—like Shakespeare and Shaw and the cinemas. Double tax on all of them,

now. But still nothing on betting. Still nothing on the winning ticket. Why not? Wouldn't it be difficult?

In peace-time, yes. It raises all sorts of rows. In war-time, no. Not if you're really trying to cut down "personal spending." Not if you're really trying to remember the "moral side."

What's the answer?

WORLD WAR

THE British Navy is now facing danger in most of the seas of the world. Remember, it is to the sacrifices of these sailors that you owe many of the comforts of civilized life which you still enjoy. In return, will you not contribute to the PUNCH COMFORTS FUND? A gift to this Fund enables you to express your gratitude in tangible form. You owe it to our sailors to see that they are well provided with extra comforts. Donations will be gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouvierie St., London, E.C.4.

I suspect—"congenital Treasury laziness." It's always easy to add a few shillings to beer, tobacco, whisky, or Shakespeare—and, every five years, twopence to tea. Anything new, like bicycles or betting, needs thought and effort and fortitude. So it isn't done.

I always think it's extraordinary the wireless licence has been the same for so many centuries.

Of course it is. However, God bless Sir Kingsley. He's got a job and a half! Have another?

Well, after your revelations, I suppose I'd better.

Cheer-oh! Here's a battleship for Britain!

And forty-five destroyers!
And here's to the motto for the Worst War of All!

What's that?
Austérité—Frugalité—Éternité.

A. P. H.

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Introspection Up-to-Date

"Well, salivary digestion is only an introductory and partial process: the main depot for starch digestion is in the first part of the intestine, where, later on, we shall again encounter our mouthful.

But before we leave this area and make our way into the stomach, a word about sugars."—*Daily Mail*.



"When I say 0900 hours the time will be exactly five past nine."

Well, Now

WHEN it seemed likely that I should be allowed, by mistake, to deliver the "Second Thoughts" in a B.B.C. Brains Trust session, the talk I prepared ran as follows :

Well, now, for one thing there was that question we had about the other two of the three one of whom was stopped by the Ancient Mariner. I said I thought they probably went on, only too glad to escape. But thirty-one people have written to me saying this was a most uncalled-for remark. One correspondent even says that he has always understood that one of this other two was an ancestor of his named, so far as I can read his writing, Stridethorp, and that it was this Mr. Stridethorp who took everything down in brachigraphy (as it was then called) and sent it to Coleridge afterwards enclosing a stamped addressed envelope; but since my correspondent's letter appears to come, so far as I can make out the postmark, from Porlock, I can only suppose he has got the whole show mixed up with Kubla Khan—and I wouldn't like to have to explain that to him either.

I once knew a man named Stridethorp myself, though I don't boast about it. Rather a tall, lanky man with a big nose; used to try to grow dwarf petunias. However.

Now I want to say a word about glass. When we had a question a few weeks ago about some kind of African hard wood I said in a sarcastic sort of way that I thought it was just about as porous as a bit of glass. By this of course I meant I thought it was not porous at all, though there are

some people who seem to have failed to understand even that. But it appears according to one correspondent that there is a porous bit of glass, and he owns it. He says he picked it up on the floor of the Crystal Palace in July 1872. He says it is in the shape of a dog, a rather odd-looking dog with raised edges, and when he puts it flat on the table and pours water into it, the water soaks through to the table in about five minutes and has to be wiped off it, he says, with a cloth. He does not mention the colour of the cloth. All the time the glass stays brilliantly transparent, he says. He wonders what the thing was ever used for, and I must say so should I wonder, if I believed a word of what he said.

All this will no doubt start a lot of people writing to me about the Crystal Palace, or dogs, or the best way of wiping water off tables, but I am taking the risk with my eyes open.

Now we come to the stamp-collectors. It seems to have annoyed some stamp-collectors when I said a few weeks ago that collecting bus-tickets teaches topography. I can't remember what tone of voice I said it in, but some stamp-collectors evidently considered it a back-handed reference to their celebrated line about stamp-collecting's teaching geography. I can only assure them I made it in no critical spirit. I'm sure that stamp-collecting teaches every bit as much geography as bus-ticket-collecting teaches topography, though I must say this war has taught a lot more people a lot more geography than ever stamp-collecting did, and I don't consider that makes it any the more valuable as a hobby. There is, of course, also the question whether you would rather learn topography at the price of being had up for unpatriotically hoarding waste-paper. When I was a boy we used to collect bus-tickets for the purpose of folding them over each other to make a thing we used to call a concertina, on which we then used to play imaginary tunes; but to do this to-day would probably be unhelpful to the war effort. This is all I have to say to stamp-collectors, rage as they may.

Another point that has apparently aroused a good deal of discussion, though perhaps in rather different circles, is that one about "She'll be coming round the mountain." You may remember that when we had a question some time ago about folk-music somebody said that it showed the human critical faculty to the best advantage, because though any given improvement in a folk-song was made by an inventor of special talent, everybody else had to recognize that it was good or it wouldn't survive. I can't actually remember that any of us said "We needs must love the highest when we see it," but I certainly don't see how that can have been avoided. Anyway, quite incidentally when examples were being given I happened to mention "She'll be coming round the mountain"—you remember there was all that fuss because we started to sing it in too high a key, and the microphone was put out of action (cheerful fellow, that engineer, wasn't he?)—and since then scores of letters have come in from members of the Forces all over the country quoting local improvements. I don't quite know why I mention this, because of course I can't tell you any of them here, except perhaps that one from a coast searchlight battery that runs

She'll be . . .

Oh, well, perhaps after all better not.

R. M.

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"February figures now to hand show that out of 47 Ministry of Food prosecutions in Eastern Division II. (Essex and Hertfordshire), 48 cases (97.92 per cent.) were successful."—*Essex Paper*. Cracking down on them, eh?



"There goes the 7.55—late, as usual."

Experiences of a Junior Officer

Road Movement

I HAVE always fought shy of movements of large numbers of troops by road. As a rule, if I found that the regiment I was in at the time was about to make a move I hurriedly posted myself elsewhere, or sent myself on a course of banjo-playing or cookery, returning only when my regiment was nicely settled in its new quarters.

On one occasion I was caught napping, however. My regiment, the —th —shires, was ordered to move at four hours' notice. There was no time for me to do anything about it. I did send myself two telegrams from the War Office, posting myself to British Guiana, but for some reason they were not delivered. Why the regiment had to move from Gulpington so suddenly I never discovered. Some said that it owed money to the "Plume of Feathers," others said it owed money to the "Horse and Jockey," others again said it owed money to the "Goat in Boots." We shall never know.

At any rate, one fine summer's morning the whole regiment set off for Nuchcombe Regis, about six miles away, in a column which extended for seven miles. As everybody knows, there are very stringent rules governing the movements of troops by road. Correct intervals between vehicles must be maintained, speeds must be regulated, occasional halts must be arranged with a view to the maximum convenience, dispatch-riders must constantly patrol the whole column. Now the fact that the head of the column, which consisted of course of Colonel Hatband's car, had already reached Nuchcombe Regis when the rear of the column, in which I was, had not even started from Gulpington, created a series of difficulties at the very outset.

Colonel Hatband, who was just going to enter the "Three Tuns" at Nuchcombe, swore that the situation was preposterous. This, he said, was not the way to make a movement by road. The only thing to do was to drive on for a few miles to allow the rear of the column to reach Nuchcombe.

This was done, and a few minutes later the C.O. received a message that the rear of the column had reached the town. The only trouble was that the front of the column was now several miles out in the country.

"There's only one thing to be done," said the Colonel. "We must drive on and reach Nuchcombe by another route."

And he gave orders to that effect. The whole column moved on again. I only just got out of the "Three Tuns" in time to swing myself into the last vehicle.

So the column moved on through the pleasant countryside. Once the Colonel, seeing a field full of mushrooms, stopped the car abruptly, and chaos might have resulted had not Major Clubb-Foote, about half-way down the column, discovered a plover's egg almost at the same time and stopped the column to send it back to Major Tinkler by special dispatch-rider. The morning glided into the afternoon, and the afternoon into evening. We had passed through Nuchcombe several times and the whistles and catcalls of the children were beginning to grow half-hearted. There seemed to be no way out of the difficulty, nor any reason why the road movement should not continue for ever.

Then the Colonel had a brain-wave. He ordered the column to divide into two parts. The front part was to go forward and the rear part was to turn about and to go back. In this way he hoped we should enter Nuchcombe simultaneously by opposite routes.

Night had fallen when the plan was put into execution. It was pitch dark when my car met the Colonel's head-on in the centre of the town. The problem was solved.

In either direction stretched masses of troops and transport, all locked together and unable to move. We had reached harbour.

Next morning we discovered that we were not in Nuchcombe Regis at all, but in Gulpington. But by that time nobody minded very much.



"Mr. Hopgood! Mr. Hopgood!"



Sillince

A Local Habitation—and a Name

AS unfamiliar things remain
In the dark corners of the brain
Where one may hunt and hunt in vain
Till something idly jogs
The mind, and up they come unsought,
So, as to-day I sat in thought,
Out of the past my memory caught
A place called Broughton Poggs.

'Tis but a name to me. Mayhap
I saw it on a one-inch map,
But that concerns me not a rap;
A deep syllabic spell
O'erwhelms me from those mated words
Till not the song of myriad birds
Nor low of ruminating herds
Could find its parallel.

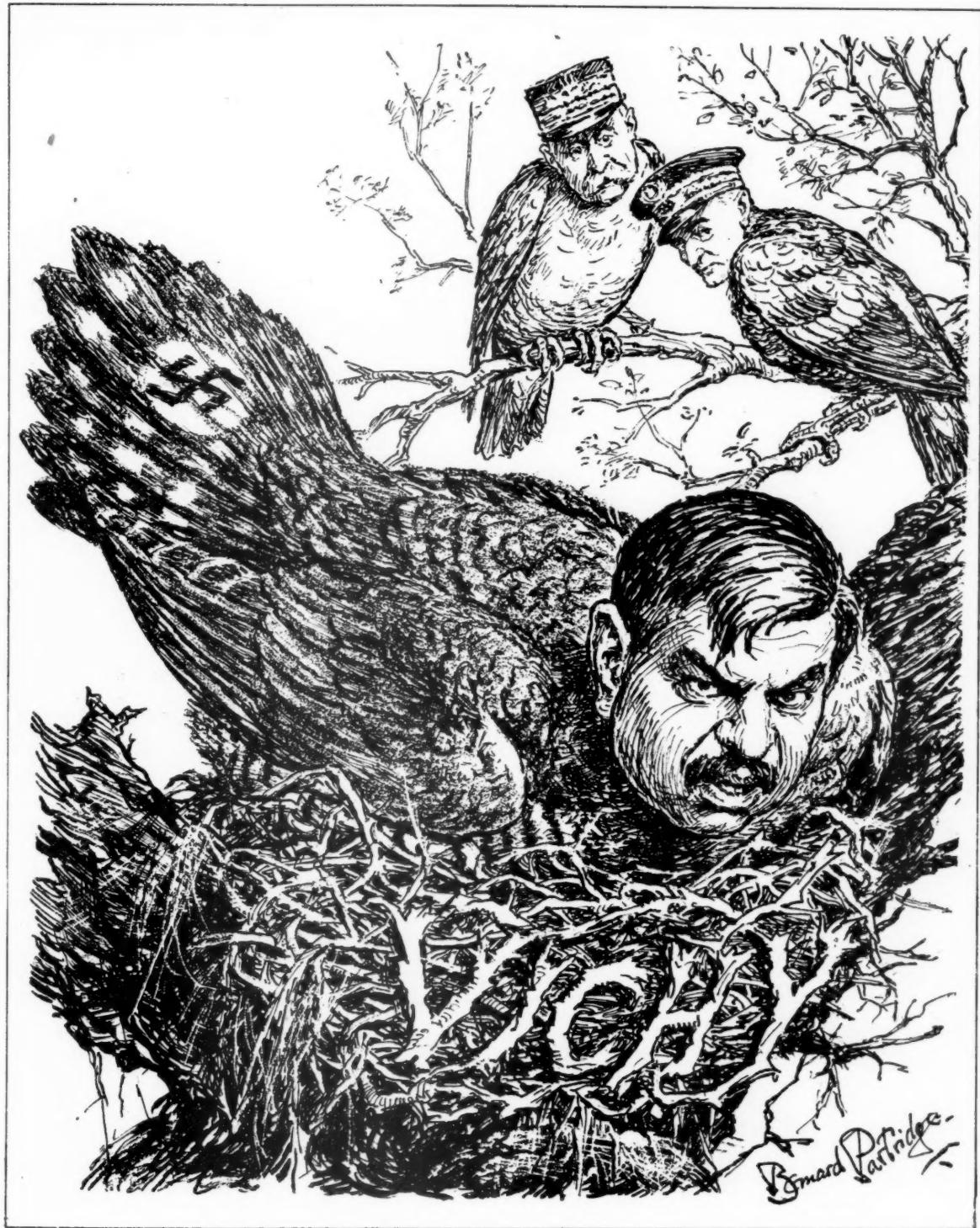
A tranquil spot, unknown to fame
Despite the magic of that name,
Dulish, no doubt, but all the same
To its few denizens dear,

I think, when Broughton Pogians roam
Afar 'neath heaven's translucent dome,
The thought of their euphonious home
Compels a silent tear.

It may be in the present stress—
I cannot know, I do but guess—
A bevy of the A.T.S.
Have found a billet there,
It may be that its quiet street
Rings daily to the laden beat
Of ammunition-booted feet;
Of that I'm not aware.

But that will go. And I await
The coming of a kindlier fate
When, though a townsman up to date,
It is my fondest dream
To find a cot at Broughton Poggs,
To roam around in rustic togs
And breed a line of comely hogs,
A creature I esteem.

DUM-DUM.



IN APRIL COME HE WILL.

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Monday, April 13th.—House of Lords:
Simon on Torts.

House of Commons : Singapore, India—and Manchester—Receive Attention.

Tuesday, April 14th.—House of Commons : The Budget.

Wednesday, April 15th.—House of Lords : Introduction—and Chorus.

House of Commons : The Budget Again.

Thursday, April 16th.—House of Commons : And Again.

Monday, April 13th.—The queerest things happened in the Commons to-day. Captain DAVID MARGESSON, the former Chief Government Whip and War Secretary, and now to be a viscount, provided the first shock by "accepting the office of Steward or Bailiff of the Manor of Northstead."

This office (which produces a pepper-corn, or something, as annual salary) is an "office of profit under the Crown," and means that the Member taking it must leave the House. It is, in fact, the legal way of resigning from Parliament, and Captain MARGESSON, who



Cs IN HIS BONNET

The Chairman of Committees pointed out that Mr. Pethick-Lawrence in his speech on the Budget dealt largely with irrelevant matters.

had given the lethal job to scores in his time, said his own farewell with traditional ceremony. The House will miss him and the smile that has for

eighteen years calmed many an angry heart.

Then Mr. VERNON BARTLETT, many-sided Independent M.P. for Bridgewater, was seen to be making his way to the Bar (the one with a capital "B," of course), there to join Mr. LIPSON, a fellow-Independent, and a stranger who proved to be Mr. DENIS KENDALL, Independent conqueror of the Government candidate in the recent Grantham by-election.

Mr. BARTLETT, who now ranks as Chief Whip of the Independents, took command, as became an enthusiast of the Parliamentary Home Guard, and led the raiding party, with three ceremonial (and most gracefully executed) bows, right up to the very Front Bench of the Government, where sat Generalissimo CHURCHILL himself.

Looking on with a keen eye to the "drill" was wigged-and-gowned Major EDWARD FELLOWES, who combines the offices of Second Clerk-Assistant of the House and Commander of its Home Guard Company—now collectively known as "The Jolly Good Fellowes." The Major nodded approval of a neat and efficient bit of manœuvring, and Mr. BARTLETT retreated to his seat, with the expression of one who had something attempted, something done, to earn a recruit for his non-party Party.

Captain STUDHOLME, Con., making his debut as unopposed new Member for Tavistock, strode up with an élan worthy of his immaculate Guards' uniform. But he was outshone by the *Ind.*

Then Mr. HERBERT MORRISON, Home Secretary, who looked worried and apprehensive, rose to make a statement about his dismissal of Sir WARREN FISHER, former head of the Civil Service, from a Civil Defence post, following Sir WARREN's intervention, with a crisp letter to the Press, in the Home Secretary's dismissal of a Deputy Regional Commissioner up Manchester way. Members had, outside, been breathing fire and slaughter about the cases.

The Home Secretary read over to himself a dozen times the long statement he was later to recite to the House. He stepped up briskly when called by the SPEAKER.

The Deputy Regional Commissioner, he said, had forfeited his confidence, as he had not only wasted petrol by going some 280 miles by road (with the team) to a firemen's football-match, but had also left his post for a whole day without telling anybody else. Sir WARREN had written to the Press a "strong and offensive letter" which

made impossible the mutual confidence essential between Minister and officer.

The House, which has so often toasted the Home Secretary—in the calefacient and not the convivial sense—proved itself a beast, but a



THE KINGSLEY WAY

"I think the Treasury has walked the tight-rope with a substantial measure of care and skill."—*The Chancellor of the Exchequer on the Controlling of War Expenditure.*

just beast. When Mr. MORRISON had finished there was silence. He had, quite definitely, got away with it. The scrap-seeking Members unrolled their sleeves, and Mr. MORRISON smiled a rather astonished, puzzled smile.

There was a sharp crash of cheering for Mr. CHURCHILL when he rose to make a short statement on: (1) the failure of the talks with Indian leaders on the future Dominion status of that sub-Continent; (2) the fall of Singapore; (3) recent heavy naval losses off Ceylon.

On the first of these grave subjects he said that not until Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS, the Lord Privy Seal, who had made the luckless attempt to get agreement, returned home, would any full statement be possible. Then, everything would be told.

On Singapore, he said that General GORDON BENNETT, the Australian commander, who was on the ill-fated island until the last, had sent a report to London, but it was "not suitable for publication." General WAVELL had been asked to collect what information he could, but this must, with the enemy at the gates of India, be only a part-time job and would take time. The full story would not be known

until the war's end, when freedom was restored to Japan's prisoners.

On the naval losses, he refused to promise that no ship should move unless covered by an air "umbrella," and said these losses were the fortune of war.

Members asked uneasily that something should be done to prevent similar losses, but Mr. CHURCHILL said frankly that he could give no such guarantee.

The House did not like his promise to make a detailed war statement later, in secret session. Members on all sides mentioned tartly that the general public, who provide the cash and the blood, would like to know how their war is going too. The matter was left over for the present.

In the Lords, Lord SIMON promised that an independent lawyer should in future decide when and whether the Government should accept responsibility for its servants' torts—in this case damage by mechanically-propelled vehicles—the Government being traditionally immune from legal action, except by its own consent.

Then both Houses went home to worry about the coming Budget.

Tuesday, April 14th.—Contrary as it is, the Commons' House shows much less interest in the Budget now that it runs into dizzily astronomical figures than it did in those dear dead days when it was "chicken-feed." Sir KINGSLEY WOOD, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had an anything but crowded and anything but excited House as audience.

With a cordial "We-can-take-it" expression, matched only by the grim "We-can-give-it" look of his auditors, the Chancellor piled on the agony.

Opposite him, in the Peers' Gallery, sat his two belt-tightening assistants, Lords WOOLTON (Food Minister) and KINDERSLEY (National Savings Committee), and they seemed pleased with Sir KINGSLEY's 137-minutes' oration.

In the manner of one who offers grace before meat, the Chancellor thanked President ROOSEVELT and the people of the United States for all they had done, by Lease-Lend, to aid us in the war. This was loudly cheered.

Straightway he plunged into a haze of statistics which swirled about him until one could scarcely see the Wood for the figures. But in the end the clouds cleared enough for us to realize that we had to find by taxes the sum of £2,400,000,000. Revenue, on existing tax basis, would be £150,000,000 short.

Members sighed. There it was. Something had to go up.

Sir KINGSLEY compassionately

THE LETTER OF THE LAW

YOU obey it by taking care not to burn or destroy Waste Paper. Are you doing your best to obey the spirit of the law too, by finding and putting out for collection every scrap of waste paper you have?

ended the suspense as speedily as possible. There would be no additions to direct taxation. (A nervous cheer.) Lady ASTOR, earnest "Pussyfoot," looked pleased and eager. Yes, beer was to go up 2d. a pint. (Lady ASTOR almost threw her neat millinery in the air.)

And spirits, by 4s. 8d. for a bottle of whisky. (Lady ASTOR rubbed her hands with glee.) And wines, by 6s. a gallon. (Lady ASTOR cheered hoarsely.) And tobacco, by 6½d. to 7½d. an ounce, 3d. for ten cigarettes. (Lady ASTOR sat gazing in silent admiration.)

The rest of the House sat silent too, but not necessarily in admiration. They recovered enough breath to cheer the announcement that the Services are to have their smokes at pre-Budget prices.

Oh, and entertainment tax was to go up too. Guinea grand-stand seats at the races (if any) were to bear fifty per cent. tax. Purchase tax on most things that make life worth living are to go up. And the payment of manual

workers' income tax was to be made simpler.

That was the fifth war Budget. Sir KINGSLEY sat down, and the House cheered again, relieved that it was not worse. A few congratulations, and then the House went home.

Wednesday, April 15th.—A day of distinguished newcomers.

The Commons, having so recently speeded the parting War Minister, welcomed the coming with signal honours. Sir JAMES GRIGG, new War Minister and victor of East Cardiff, was introduced, with the PRIME MINISTER (in person) and Mr. CLEMENT ATTLEE (in person) as his sponsors. It was a graceful gesture of appreciation of one who has done—and it is to be hoped will do—great things for his country.

Sir JAMES, looking supremely nervous, nevertheless came down the Floor at a spanking pace, and the whole thing—bows, oath, signing and all—was over in Commando time.

Lady GRIGG, in the gallery, could scarce forbear to cheer—but did.

The Commons talked about the Budget, but most M.P.s hurried off to see Archbishop Lord LANG of Lambeth take his seat in the Lords. In the scarlet and ermine of temporal Peerage, he was brought into the House of which he has been an ornament for decades. Lord WIGRAM and Lord MACMILLAN sponsored him.

Politicians will have their little jokes, and the ceremony was, of course, called the "Lambeth Walk." But one added that he simply had to come to see "Old Lang Sign."

This pleasant interlude over, Lord WINSTON and others said a bibful on the injustices meted out to the Fleet Air Arm.

Thursday, April 16th.—Sir JAMES GRIGG made a second appearance to-day and showed that the élan, éclat and verve of his first was no accident.

In a clear, neat and crisp voice he read a long statement about the Prisoners of War Department of the Red Cross, which has been the subject of recent questions. The burden of it was that nearly everything is O.K., but that the few things wrong are to be put right.

The House has gained a notable (and audible) recruit.

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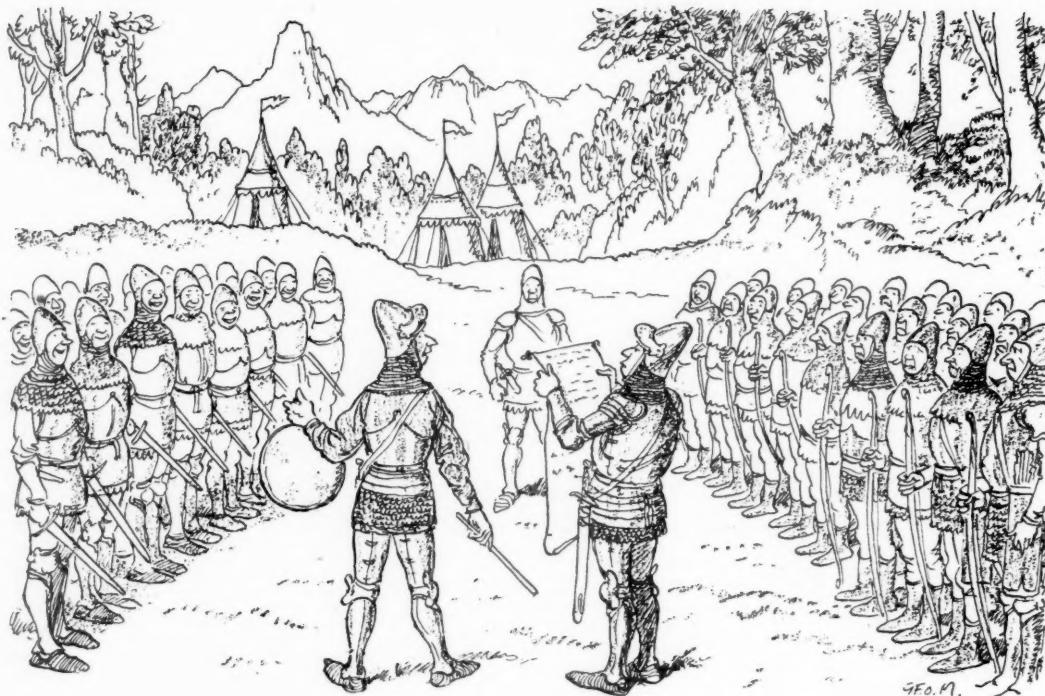
"WANTED, Married Couple, aged 60-70; do work small house; good area, near everything; comforts, good food, good wage, plain cooking. Present couple retiring. Lady and gentleman."—Local Paper.

Too good for the job, evidently.

"'Ere y're, all the news bengraved on a frip'ny piece!"

Maurice Lovell

—



"The Men-at-Arms are leading by five to four, and now we're going to ask one of the Archers to spell 'Plantagenet'."

Behaviour

ONCE a week the O.C.T.U. is released from Lone Hill Camp and taken for a few hours, by special omnibuses, to Coasthampton. Coasthampton might possibly appear to a civilian to be a rather ordinary town, but to the released O.C.T.U. it is what the late Omar Khayyám would have described as Paradise Enow, having eighteen public houses, four cinemas and two lots of baths.

It was to the baths that Cadet Sympson and I first directed our steps. The shower-baths in the camp are well-intentioned, but ineffective. By manipulating the taps it is possible to obtain either ice-cold water or boiling-hot water, but no ingenuity can make them mingle. Newcomers try to get bathed by sudden rushes in and out of hot and cold alternately, but after a few baths like this they decide to bathe in Coasthampton.

"Public baths?" said the policeman in answer to our query—"first right, second left."

We arrived to find a long queue of soldiers (ordinary soldiers, not proud white-ribbed O.C.T.U. cadets) waiting their turn. In the old days Sympson would have found some way of wriggling to the front of the queue, but being now half an officer and therefore half a gentleman, he just said "Their need is greater than mine," and we asked another policeman.

"Try the Turkish Baths," he said.

We did, and very nice they were. But when we emerged Sympson found that he was wearing a cap with the badge of the Royal Loamshire Regiment. It had, of course, no white tape round it, so he took off his shoulder tabs also.

"How very annoying!" he said. "It's lucky I have a spare cap of my own back in camp."

I was not sure whether it was correct for me, an officer-cadet, to walk round the town with Sympson, who was now, as it were, in the ranks again. I decided to risk it.

We had some tea in a large tea-shop with a band, and we had been sitting there only a few minutes when one of our camp officers appeared in the doorway and looked nonchalantly round the room.

Sympson chuckled.

"He gave you a very searching glance," he said. "Don't you remember that they warned us they would be observing how we behaved in Coasthampton? They will haunt all the restaurants and pubs in search of white bands and white tabs. On the whole I am not sorry I changed hats with that other fellow."

The realization that I was observed had an odd effect on me. In the past I have just eaten afternoon tea without giving a thought to the etiquette of the thing. At the moment the officer appeared I was attacking a chocolate éclair, eating it, as I always do, as if it were a banana. Only so can one get a really satisfactory mouthful. Immediately I saw the officer, however,

I dropped it hastily on the plate and attacked it delicately with a fork. I then raised a minute portion to my lips, and dropped it on my best battle-dress. As I mopped it off my trousers the officer reappeared. He made no sign, he said no word, but I felt that he saw and noted all.

My pen recoils from a detailed description of the rest of that dreadful day. It did not matter where we went, the same officer was there, or if he were not, one of his colleagues was.

Personally I acted so virtuously that the "observers" must have taken me for an imbecile, but Sympson, revelling in his incognito, behaved dreadfully. He was facetious with waitresses, amorous with barmaids, and insulting to tobacconists.

And he drank. He and I are two-pint men. Two pints mellow us and bring out the hidden beauties of our characters. To-night, however, I drank only one pint.

"We have had no beer (except N.A.A.F.I. beer)," I said, "for a week. Our usual two pints may go to our heads. I will have only one."

Sympson took the opposite view. Having had no beer for a week he reckoned that he was entitled to sixteen pints. After four pints he was giving a major a few hints on tactics. After five he was showing the landlord how to play darts.

Our officer appeared in the doorway just as we were leaving. Sympson looked at him superciliously.

"I don't like that man's face," he said, "let's throw him out."

I dissuaded him. I hustled him out into the street. Then I left him and went, to be on the safe side, to a missionary meeting in a local church hall. I was surprised at 10 P.M. to find Sympson on the bus. He had his own hat back again; he told me that it had been given him as a memento by General Wavell, whom he met in the Green Man. He added that I had better not let the officers see that I was drunk.

○ ○

"Wanted, Manager for Fried Fish Shop; sole control."—*Advt. in Kent Paper.*

There is a boy to look after the kippers.

A Lament

IT induces a sensation
Of irritation
(Not to mention frustration
And even indignation)
When one makes humble solicitation
For employment in some useful
occupation
In this crisis in the affairs of the nation
And receives in reply a communication
To the effect that in relation
To the aforesaid application
It will receive due consideration
After further amplification,
Explanation
And elucidation,
And of course the most careful
investigation
And filling up of forms in duplication,
Triplification,
And quadruplication,
And that the said application
Will then be open for further—
Oh, blast—
Procrastination!

C. F. S.



"Yes, I have put on a lot of weight lately—trouble is my kids won't drink all their milk."

News

NEWS," said my hostess. "Miss Moax has found her boot-scaper, and the M'Tossies are definitely not returning to Prattle Parva."

"I am glad about the boot-scaper. I know Miss Moax values it. But I don't think I know the M'Tossies...."

"No. They were pre-war, before you came to the village. . . . The Rector will be very pl—that is, surprised. They retired from business and settled down here. Mr. M'Tossie then obtained a quite hush-hush job, so definitely confidential that he did not even tell the Rector. He always referred to it as O.I.Z. Cryptic letters, probably.

"About Miss Moax's boot-scaper. Being the only one in the village she is naturally proud of it. Her father, who was the blacksmith before Veale, made it for her on her twenty-first birthday. Her initials M. M. M. are worked in it. Miss Moax feels that people should have got used to the scraper sticking out so far into the road, and as she says, *she* is not responsible for the war and there being a black-out. However.

"The first time it was missing the culprit was never discovered. The scraper was found at Doodles' corner, with one M broken out. We suspected

an evacuee, naturally. But we never knew. It was much discussed at the time.

"The second time it was Woost who removed the scraper. He nearly broke his neck over it, and threw it into the ditch behind the 'Duck.' Dear, dear, the result was most distressing. The Rector had to adjudicate. High words were used. At last the Rector persuaded Woost to dig up Miss Moax's garden for nothing, and she accepted the olive-branch. This time the scraper was traced to the gipsies' camp at Idle. They said they thought it was salvage. But Miss Moax is so glad to get it back that she has forgiven them. She is yielding to public opinion and taking it indoors after dusk. . . .

"The M'Tossies. They lived at 'Veecantakeit,' the bungalow with the battlements. The evacuees have torn out the fireplaces and wrecked the garden, but I believe the bungalow is still fairly habitable. . . . Mr. M'Tossie was the churchwarden. Unfortunately he and the Rector could never see eye to eye on any subject whatever. Especially billeting, vestments, and the lych-gate matter. But as I said to the Rector, it is much better to let a new churchwarden have his head and pull on the curb later. However.

"Mr. M'Tossie worked hard to make

the village a better place to live in. The Rector considered him officious, but it was Mr. M'Tossie who insisted on Miss Honeyball having a better black-out than a black apron. One night the light could be seen from her scullery window across the allotments as far as the water meadows. Mr. M'Tossie took it up with the authorities and she was fined four shillings. He described the light as a meteor to the Bench.

"On another occasion he desired Saul Grumbles to keep his pigs off the highway. On Saul showing a defiant spirit Mr. M'Tossie drove the pigs himself. Unfortunately they ran into the Oyles' garden, just planted. Dear, dear. The uproar was frightful. We could hear the tumult in the Rectory. It has not entirely died down yet.

"The M'Tossie tartan is a handsome one. Mr. M'Tossie wore it—once. The Rector . . . Mrs. M'Tossie was a Cluttering from Woansome. Her father was a plumber and, having finished his apprenticeship at Bitt's, came to Prattle Parva to practise. Unfortunately there was no scope for plumbing, so he went to Edinburgh and made a fortune. Mrs. M'Tossie met her husband when she was holding his blow-pipe in the bathroom of one of the Clan M'Tossie when Cluttering was temporarily short of men. Romantic, don't you think? She has often told the story. . . .

"Mrs. M'Tossie dressed well. She was thoughtful too, and on those occasions when she was dressed for a function such as the Masonic Gala at Woansome she always drove slowly down the street with the sunshine roof off and the windows open. A kindly gesture, especially in December. On one occasion she wore prawn silk and pearls. A charming frock. The village still mentions it in conversation.

"I hope the Rector will not be late for lunch. With such a budget of news . . ."

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A Well-Earned Decoration

"President Roosevelt is to present a gold medal to 11-year-old Roland Boucher, of Vermont, for having five children who had fallen through ice."—*Evening Paper*.

○ ○

"When Southgate Food Control Committee met on Tuesday, Chairman Robert Grant asked members how they were fading with their milk supplies."—*Local Paper*.

Fast?



"I don't know how you chaps get your boots so nice and dull."

Talks for the Times

I WANT to begin the day, for those of you who haven't begun it already, with a few thoughts about how to turn your waste-paper into waste-paper, so that no paper is being wasted when it might be winning the war for us instead.

Now I realize, and so does the Government, that many of you are making *spills* out of paper nowadays, and keeping them just behind the clock on the mantelpiece, or else in the vase that stands where the clock used to stand before you sent it to a place near Stockdale-on-Tees, where someone said there was an old man who could repair clocks within six months, but sometimes it was more like twelve.

Well, making spills is all part of the national effort, and you only want to be a wee bit careful not to hand Aunt Maud a page of Aunt Maud's last letter when she wants a light for her cigarette. Besides, one of the things we must all remember in these stirring times we live in is not to burn paper, otherwise it isn't really helping to win the war; so be very, very careful not to put any of your spills anywhere near the fire.

Another aspect of this very important question that many people ask about is this: What *is* waste-paper? Are grandfather's letters from Harrogate, written to his first wife in 1848, to count as waste-paper, or not? There they've been, in Aunt Sarah's old green canvas hat-box in the box-room, for years and years, and one only knew they were there at all because someone looked through every single box or case in the whole attic to see if there was even one piece of tissue-paper for packing with, and there wasn't.

My answer to this question is, definitely, that each one of you must answer it for yourself.

The same thing applies to your own old diaries, your mother's old diaries, and everybody else's old diaries.

Bus-tickets, of course, are quite another thing and must be pushed into the receptacle provided as you get out of the bus, *at whatever risk*.

There are special rules about paper that has been used to wrap up fish, but they are rather negative in character and inclined to emphasize the number of ways in which the Government *doesn't* want this paper. Probably your simplest plan will be to cook and eat it with the fish.

Of course the ideal place in which to place waste-paper is a waste-paper

basket, and some of you may be wondering what to do when the waste-paper basket is full.

You must unhesitatingly empty it and start again.

Just one word more. Don't waste paper by making waste-paper of your ration books, clothes-coupons or identity-cards.

Keep these for a bonfire for the peace celebrations. E. M. D.



"No, Madam—not if you bought a 'undred pipes would I sell you cleaners to use as curlers."

Compleatism and Defacency

NEITHER complacent nor defeatist, I try to strike the happy mean. I'm a defacent old compleatist; My joy is glum, my gloom serene. I pity statesmen born to blunder, I pity generals put to flight. Why give the brains to me, I wonder, Who have no voice to set them right?

Our Booking-Office
(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Elizabeth Tydder

A BOOK by HILAIRE BELLOC may not greatly illumine its ostensible subject, but it is sure to enrich our conception of Mr. BELLOC himself, with his mixture of humour and fanaticism, insight and casuistry, realism and fantastic caprice. Mr. BELLOC looks back with regret to an older England, which formed a part of Christendom until the catastrophe of the Reformation, since when things have been going from bad to worse. He has written many books on this theme, and in his latest, *Elizabethan Commentary* (CASSELL, 7/6), sets himself to explode the traditional English admiration of the TUDORS in general and ELIZABETH in particular. Much of Mr. BELLOC's destructive criticism is convincing. OWEN TYDDER, the founder of the Tydder fortunes (Tudor, it seems, is only the Anglicized form of the original Welsh name) was doubtless a rascally adventurer. HENRY VIII may not unfairly be described as "diseased, violent and unstable." The spoliation of the Abbey lands, and the subsequent unwillingness of the new owners to restore them to the Church, was probably the most important single factor in the break with Rome. ELIZABETH was violent and capricious, emotionally warped, and given to "peering into one character after another and playing on each in turn." But where one must part company with Mr. BELLOC is in his assumption that with the Catholic PLANTAGENETS the life of action and ambition was free from the taints which disfigured it with the TUDORS. "The Plantagenet name and the glory of it shine over the French and English Middle Ages," Mr. BELLOC writes. This is not how JOAN OF ARC felt about the PLANTAGENETS, nor how Limoges felt when it was put to fire and sword by the Black Prince. There is much to admire in EDWARD I, and EDWARD III and HENRY V, but the fact that they lived before the Reformation does not mean that they belonged to a higher order of beings than ELIZABETH. In controversy of the accepted view of ELIZABETH's reign as the most glorious in our history, Mr. BELLOC denies to Elizabethan England any strong consciousness of itself as a nation. Patriotism, he says, became the religion of the English much later, as a result of the struggle with France, and not of the struggle with Spain. This, to put it gently, is a misstatement. After the massacre of St. Bartholomew in 1572, Protestant nationalism grew quickly. It was intensified by the defeat of the Spanish Armada, with which the long war against Spain opened, and reached a climax of patriotic ardour, never surpassed in our history, in the early fifteen-nineties, when SHAKESPEARE was writing his historical plays—"Come the three corners of the world in arms, and we shall shock them . . ." Mr. BELLOC represents ELIZABETH as lying low during what he calls "the episode of the Armada," and delivering her famous speech of defiance at Tilbury after the danger, such as it was, had passed. She had, he says, no special English patriotism. Christendom in her days was still one country, and her feeling for the Duke of ANJOU, "the nearest thing to love she ever knew," proves her indifference to national sentiment. "Anjou," Mr. BELLOC writes, "was a Frenchman, and a Frenchman of a sort which a modern English woman would find particularly unattractive." There is, however, no reason to believe that the ordinary Elizabethan woman would have found much attraction in ANJOU, the warts on whose nose, according to the English ambassador in Paris, could be rendered tolerable to a beholder only with divine

assistance. It was not as a member of Christendom, but as an ailing elderly woman, sick of the unrealities of power, that ELIZABETH was charmed by the gusto and effrontery of the youthful ANJOU's courtship.

One need not go to the English historians of the nineteenth century for tributes to the political genius of ELIZABETH. Her Catholic contemporaries, from the Spanish ambassador at the beginning of her reign through POPE SIXTUS V to HENRI QUATRE, all freely acknowledged the extraordinary combination of qualities which enabled her to raise the impoverished distracted England of MARY TUDOR to a place among the great European powers. In one of his more fanciful moments Mr. BELLOC pictures ELIZABETH, as her end drew near, oppressed by the consciousness that she was not a Catholic sovereign, surrounded by the prelates of the old religion, but the figurehead of a rapacious crew whose loot she had shared. In a still wilder flight of fancy he imagines MARY STUART, on her way to heaven, looking down with a certain sombre joy "from some intermediate condition prior to Beatitude" on ELIZABETH's despair as she lay dying. But, in one of those revulsions to which, being a poet as well as a partisan, Mr. BELLOC is often subject, he can also write of her last moments: "She felt that she was ceasing to be herself and that is what probably most of us will feel when the moment comes to reply to the summons of Azrael."

H. K.

Cortés and His Mexico

From the half-blind PRESCOTT compiling his imaginative and gracefully stylized *History of Mexico* to Mr. SALVADOR DE MADARIAGA producing with scientific means to philosophic ends his great *Hernán Cortés* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 21/-) is a long step in Transatlantic history. For PRESCOTT's age, Spain's conquest of the New World was a matter of artillery versus obsidian swords. For Mr. DE MADARIAGA, it is the defeat of a primitive yet already decadent civilization by the Christian Renascence. His CORTÉS, with all his faults—and you cannot scotch the bloodiest empire the world has ever seen without bloodshed—was of the race of paladins; his Christian humility cramped his style as a conquistador; and the uncontrollable scorn with which he smashed the reeking idols of his Mexican hosts—he who had been welcomed among them as Quetzalcoatl the wind-god—showed how far, with this son of Extremadura and Salamanca, truth came before expediency. His subsequent efforts to divert his men from the gold-hunt to tilling the soil, his anxiety—in a consistent aim at racial equality—that native cultivators should be equally "honoured and favoured," put him in the forefront of colonial governors. For the biographer who has so magnificently and justly discerned him, CORTÉS is "the first Mexican patriot."

H. P. E.

Prophecy Out-Distanced

Mr. VICTOR BAYLEY, posing the question *Is India Impregnable?* (HALE, 12/6), comes perilously near making a reputation as a sardonic humorist, for he bases almost the whole of his thesis on the assumption that Singapore, unconquerable from the sea and wholly unapproachable through the Malayan jungle, so bars attack from the east that the only threat seriously to be considered is from Russia—Russia still unassailed by Germany—or the northwest frontier. He realizes certainly that the Japanese are uneasy neighbours who need watching, but with Rangoon and Ceylon unassailable, only in his wildest flights can he take them seriously. Never perhaps has history so completely outrun an honest scribe. Fortunately for his book it is clear that the study of defensive strategy is only a



*Raw Subaltern. "WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?"
Air Mechanic (gauging his man). "SWINGING THE LEAD, SIR."
Subaltern. "RIGHT-O! CARRY ON!"*

F. H. Townsend, April 24th, 1918

means to an excellent end. What Mr. BAYLEY really wants to write about is India—her people and their problems, her roads and railways, her mountains, rivers and deserts, most of all the "Hills"—the Khyber Pass, the Chitral Road, the Gumal Valley. There he speaks with authority. He covers so much ground, indeed, that he rather tends to over-simplification, and he has a taste for phrases—"kindly fruits of the earth," "Dame Nature," "stalking famine" and the like—that is perhaps a little out of fashion; yet he has caught much and passed on something of the perennial fascination of Hindustan.

C. C. P.

Saive, or Virtue Rewarded

To allow a "natural mystic" to tell her own story would be a trying experiment in any novelist; and if Miss TEMPLE LANE has managed very gracefully in her own way to perform this particular feat it is mainly because her own

way is too imaginative to challenge anything very stark in supernatural reality. *House of My Pilgrimage* (MULLER, 8/6) relates the attempt of an Irish farmer's daughter to reform, in the interests of his own soul and a possible marriage with herself, the philandering son of her family's feudal superiors. The Comerfords had lost their old estate, Coulgreina, to the Devereuxes; and when Robert, younger son of the encroaching house, turns up with a female hanger-on at its harsh sea-girt substitute, Carrigadrihan, it takes the *nom de guerre* of "Brown" and the appeal of a boating accident to ensure the couple hospitality. Robert's strictly dishonourable pursuit of *Saive Comerford* has an odd flavour of *Pamela*, though the Irishwoman who keeps her valiant end up until marriage-lines are mentioned adds a Celtic genius for reverie to the Englishwoman's sound practicality. A very pretty interlude in provincial France reinforces the nostalgic atmosphere which is this unusual book's main charm.

H. P. E.

Adastral Bodies

Churchgoers

MOST of us have nothing against going to church. Some of us might even go of our own accord if we were not so certain that we should have to go under compulsion in any case.

But perhaps that is putting it too strongly. Second-Class Aircraftman Potter, who is against everything in Service life on principle, tells us that there is no question of compulsion. Hoping to learn something to his advantage, he has made a close study of King's Regulations and Air Council Instructions, and he declares savagely (being savage about everything, but meaning no harm) that we are fully entitled, upon reaching the west door of St. Mary's, Muddington, to turn smartly about and go and sit on the churchyard wall until the service is over.

None of us has done this yet, and our reluctance to indulge a rare privilege may be accounted for in several ways. First, we do not believe Second-Class Aircraftman Potter. To date, he has removed his headress and filed up the nave and into his pew as meekly and reverently as the rest of us, and while it is no doubt a comfort to him to know in his heart that he could stay out in the sunshine if he liked, his behaviour does nothing to encourage his fellow-worshippers to try it. Secondly, there has never been any suggestion in the attitude of the N.C.O.s that any such alternative is open to us. "There will be a church parade on Sunday," they announce, challenging us to groan or make any other demonstration. "There will be a ROLL-CALL!" they add, glowering. "Any absentees," they conclude— "will be on a charge!" Somehow, in the face of such confidence, Second-Class Aircraftman Potter's legal loophole seems to dwindle to needle's-eye size.

But these are not the main reasons why we file meekly into church, Sunday after Sunday, when all the time (apparently) we could legitimately stay outside. No, the main reason is to be found in the distinction between going on church parade and merely going to church. Our padre knows we are a fidgety lot. He skips the longer prayers, chooses the shorter hymns, makes his own address a cheerful, pithy eight-minute affair. The service itself is all over in half an hour or so, and before we have really finished our manoeuvrings for the thickest and

softest hassock we are all streaming out into the sunshine again.

Yet church parade, of which thirty minutes' worship is just a sort of incidental hush about half-way through, runs away with the whole of our Sunday morning.

The whole of Sunday morning, did we say? Why, it runs away with the best part of Saturday morning as well, now we come to think of it. We have our church parade rehearsal then, right on the Front, in full view of the public—though of course they have no idea what is going on. That's the whole point of having the rehearsal on Saturday instead of Sunday. If we devoted a couple of hours on Sunday morning between, say, eight and ten to forming and reforming, sorting ourselves out in sizes ("Tallest on the right, shortest on the left, at the double, *si-i-i-i-ize!*"), marching this way, marching that way, falling out, falling in, trying it with our respirators on, stacking them against the sea-wall and trying it with them off, rushing like mad to get our proper ones back and trying it with them on again . . . well—if we did all this on a Sunday morning, whatever would the public think? Knowing that Sunday is a day of rest (even, to a certain extent, at Airmen's Training Centres) they would deduce that our prolonged evolutions could be a prelude to nothing but church parade, and would perhaps write to *The Times* and ask if it was necessary. That would never do.

Besides, it would not leave us time on Sunday to march all over Muddington-on-Sea, immaculate in "best blue," greatcoats and woollen gloves, showing ourselves off to that same public—who, for some reason, do not become indignant at the spectacle of men marching. Marching men are so obviously getting on with something, even if they are making a three-mile march of a journey to church which could, by a careful study of a plan of the town, be reduced to about eight hundred yards. . . .

On one point we are agreed. The service itself is the best part of the whole business. The padre's informal appeal for volunteers for the choir-stalls produces a response never equalled by appeals for volunteers made on secular occasions; indeed it usually develops into something of a scrimmage, so that extra accommodation has to be allotted in the front pews. Experience has taught the C.O.

and other officers (detailed for church parade in Daily Routine Orders) to leave these seats vacant and to take second place for once.

The voluntary choir, it is to be remarked, is always composed of the most unlikely people. Second-Class Aircraftmen Plunket, Crebbin and Bloomer, for example, are always the first three to mount the chancel steps; now, who would have suspected that these hardened habitués of the N.A.A.F.I. liquor-bar would be willing, even eager, to stand shoulder to shoulder beneath the tall stained-glass windows and roar out defiantly the one hundred and fiftieth Psalm? But roar it out they do, and with just as much enthusiasm (and much the same technique) as if it were their declared favourite, "Salome," or the marching masterpiece, "She'll Be Wearing Silk Pyjamas When She Comes."

Second-Class Aircraftman Binns, who gloomily pronounces himself an atheist (without perhaps being quite clear what he means)—he is in the choir-stalls too. On his left is that notorious lady-killer, Second-Class Aircraftman Fawcett, while Sergeant Noakes, whose parade-ground oratory all but singes his Squadron's hair, is booming out a passable bass part on his right.

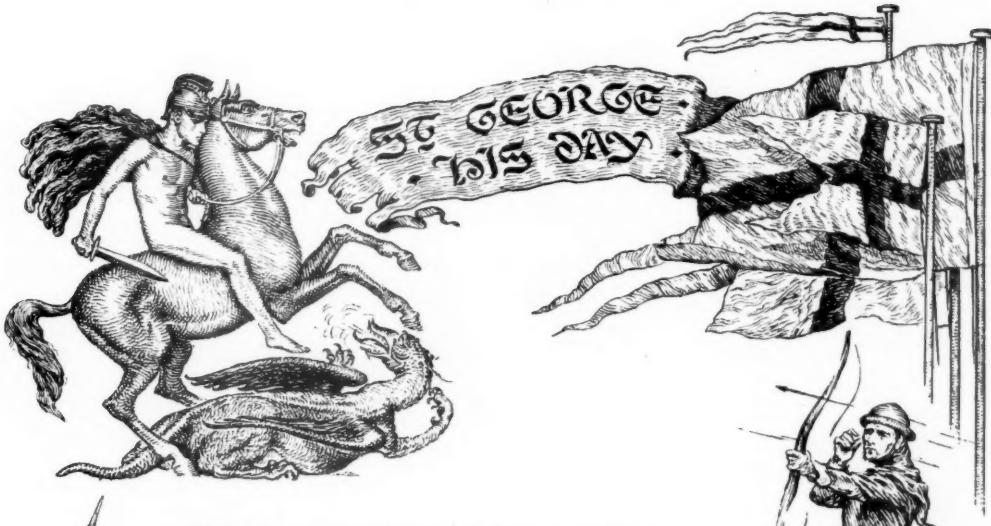
But the sunshine, streaming through the pinkish gown of a stained-glass apostle, gently touches the features of the most surprising chorister of them all. There, amidst the singers, bleating away in a reedy but penetrating tenor, is none other than Second-Class Aircraftman Potter. Is it the kindly lighting which softens the habitual violence of his expression as he throws himself heart and soul into "All things that have breath . . ."? Or is it just that comfortable knowledge that after the next verse, if he feels like it, he can stride boldly out of the church and have a cigarette on the churchyard wall?

• •

Uncle

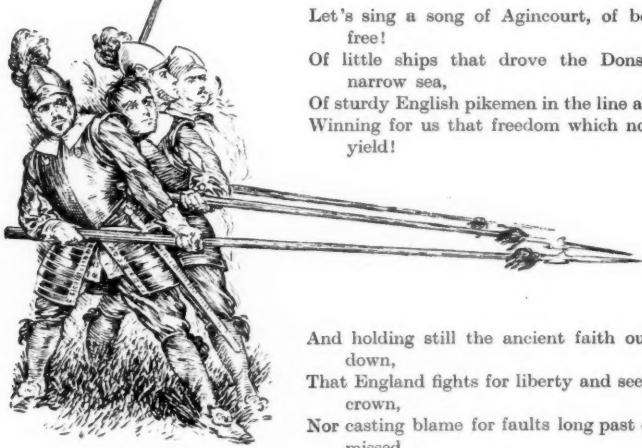
UNCLE was a wharfinger
At Bow. His bales of gum,
Arabic and tragacanth,
Wharfed him a tidy sum.

One day he met a lioness
And, rather rashly, wink't.
A lioness-atte-Bow is rare,
But uncle is extinct.



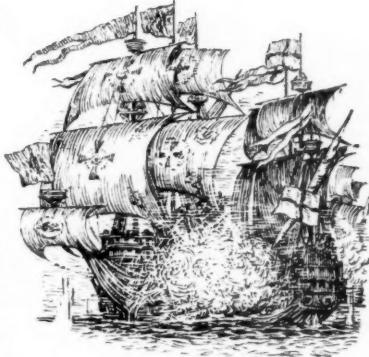
LET's sing a song of downs and dales, of wolds and rolling shires,
Of sunny English villages, of stately English spires,
Of rugged English cliffs and coasts, of rocks and golden sand,
Of all that's fair and lovely in our green and pleasant land.

Let's sing a song of Agincourt, of bowmen stout and free!
Of little ships that drove the Dons from England's narrow sea,
Of sturdy English pikemen in the line at Chalgrove Field,
Winning for us that freedom which no Englishman will yield!



And holding still the ancient faith our fathers handed down,
That England fights for liberty and seeks no conqueror's crown,
Nor casting blame for faults long past or golden chances missed
Let's out and give the dragon's tail another damned good twist!

J. S. H.



D. Shicks

Reading Time

IT is odd, is it not, that a chance glance at a magazine should alter a man's future. For years I have been consumed by an ambition to make a lasting contribution to English Letters, but apart from my popular index to the Rev. T. R. Pipe's *Flora and Fauna of Megthorpe and District* I have achieved little or nothing on which to base my claims to immortality. Now, however, I see my remaining years rich in promise. I dedicate them to the service of literature.

The magazine in question was American. I happened to read one of its short stories while waiting for an interview with my dentist. The story itself was quite unremarkable—a slight thing of amateur detection—but when I was about to turn the page my eye was arrested by an unusual sub-title: "Reading Time—Eight Minutes." Rather foolishly, I suppose, but excusably in view of my literary training, I took this direction as a variation of such clichés as "Time—the present" and "Ten Years later". . . and read through the story again thinking that I had omitted some subtle chronometrical point. After all, you never know with detective fiction writers.

I was so engrossed in the problem that I cancelled my appointment, borrowed the magazine and returned home. My atlas told me that there are several Readings in the United States. By allowing fifteen degrees of longitude to one hour I worked out the deviations from Standard Time at each place, but I was still unable to account for the

eight minutes. Now it is a marked trait in my character that, my interest once aroused, I will move heaven and earth to arrive at a satisfactory explanation. Accordingly I put the problem to my wife.

"You silly!" she said. "It means that it takes eight minutes to read the story."

I saw immediately what she meant and returned to my study to put the thesis to the test. It was correct. The novelty of the idea soon overcame my conservative distaste of commercialism in the arts and I realized that fate, acting in the interests of literature, had directed my unwilling steps to the dentist that day.

Already in my mind's eye I could see the title-pages of the classics:

Vanity Fair (or something)
by

W. M. Thackeray (or somebody)

Reading Time assessed by

J. SOPWITHTE

14 hrs. 15 mins. (or something).

If the plan already taking root in my brain should come to fruition the great treasures of literature would be revitalized. The English love of races and records might well be guided by a healthy competition into the serener pastures of learning. I had a new world in the making—a civilization where men were idolized not because they ran a hundred yards in May, because they made a thousand runs in ten seconds or because they made terrific breaks at

golf, but because they read Dickens in "evens," Trollope in bus queues or Ulysses before breakfast.

There were other advantages too. The statisticians would be delighted and the libraries would be run on efficient lines. A borrower would no longer be expected to read *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and a novel by Beverley Nichols in the same length of time.

I began the monumental task immediately. Clearly the official Sopwhittle reading time must be average time—a happy medium between that of the illiterate and that of the blasé reviewer. I invited the co-operation of my gardener and he began with *The Pilgrim's Progress*. When he died, four years later, I found from the discolouration of the pages that he had reached page 13. Other assistants have proved equally unsuitable. The scheme involved a considerable outlay of capital for the purchase of books—very few of which have so far been returned.

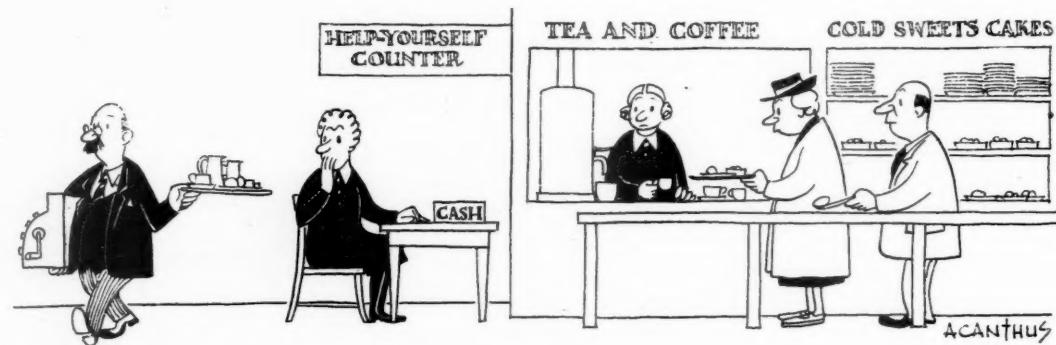
Six months ago I took stock of my position and decided to continue the work single-handed. There was only one disadvantage to the new decision—it meant that I should have to read the classics.

○ ○

One Crowded Hour

"In the last war General Pershing called him his 'best soldier.' One of his outstanding achievements in France was the moving of 800,000 men for the Argonne offensive.

It is understood that the party crossed from America in a bomber."—*Evening Paper*.



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